

# School Remediation Photos



Look inside for more info on asbestos removals at Libby schools!



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# Asbestos Removals at Local Schools

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Fact Sheet Number 6

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\* HEALTH & SAFETY FIRST \*

In early July 2001, EPA began the process of transferring asbestos-contaminated soil from the **Plummer Elementary** ice rink and the athletic tracks at **Libby High School** and **Middle School** to the Grace Mine Site. The work is part of EPA's effort to protect the health of the citizens of Libby by removing source areas of asbestos from public areas. The contaminated soil from the local schools will be temporarily stockpiled at the **KDC Flyway** site north of Libby, prior to being transported to the mine site. EPA used the KDC Flyway property last year for sampling activities.



EPA has designed this work carefully, with the health and safety of workers and the community as the primary concern. The contractors conducting the work are VERY experienced in the safe removal of asbestos-containing materials.

This Fact Sheet presents health and safety and scheduling information on these activities, as well as answers to frequently asked questions.

## Protective Clothing and Equipment

Because they are working in *direct contact* with the asbestos, workers will be wearing protective clothing and equipment during the removal. This includes gloves, white Tyvek suits, and respirators. This gear serves to protect workers from inhalation of asbestos fibers. It also allows them to be fully decontaminated before leaving the site, thereby *protecting the community*. *People who are not working with the materials on site DO NOT need to wear this protective gear.*

## Decontamination

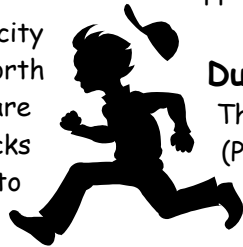
The work areas at the schools and the KDC Flyway will be fenced and segregated to prevent contamination from being spread beyond the excavation areas. During the removal, workers or equipment cannot leave the site without a thorough decontamination. This includes removal of disposable clothing and washing of any exposed body parts or equipment. Additionally, **NO ONE** will be allowed on site without authorization.

## Dust Control and Monitoring

The removal work is being completed under conditions designed to prevent asbestos fibers from becoming airborne. This includes wetting the materials during excavation and transport, monitoring wind conditions, and making visual dust observations. As a further precaution, air monitoring will be used to verify the success of the control measures. The workers will be wearing personal air monitors, and the air in and beyond the work area will be continuously sampled for asbestos fibers *during the actual removal activities*. EPA may be contacting some residents about placing an air monitor on their property to provide air quality data in the neighborhood.

## Road Safety

Loaded and empty trucks will be traveling on city streets between the schools and the stockpile north of town. The drivers are experienced and are aware of the precautions necessary to move large trucks safely through town. Routes have been chosen to maximize safety, and drivers will be careful of their speeds and alert to the potential for children to be in the road. *Please help us by reminding your children to be extra aware of traffic during this time.*



### Other Useful Contacts:

- John Podolinsky, Montana DEQ Asbestos Control Program, (406) 444-2690
- Dan Strausbaugh, Montana/Libby Representative, ATSDR, (406) 293-2728

## Closures

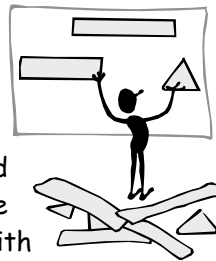
The tennis courts at the high school will be closed during the excavation period. The walking/bike trail within the high school property will also be closed. Currently, these closures are expected to last from July 27 to August 17, 2001. The closed areas will be marked with flagging tape and signs, and your cooperation in respecting these closures is greatly appreciated.

## Duration

The work at each school will be done consecutively (Plummer Elementary, Libby High, then Libby Middle). The process entails three steps: mobilization, removal, and restoration.

The first thing you may have noticed was the fencing installed around each school's work area during the week of July 9. This was followed by the asbestos removals, which is when you may notice workers wearing protective gear and see loaded trucks on city streets.

Transport of soils from the removals began on July 18, 2001. All soils should be stockpiled at the KDC Flyway site by early September, and the stockpiled soils should be transported to the mine site by the end of 2001. With the exception of the final restoration of the high school track, the entire project should be done by late September. To minimize disruption to neighbors, work hours will be between 7:00am and 5:30pm. The restoration of the tracks will begin after the asbestos has been removed.



**For more information, please feel free to contact the EPA Information Center, at 501 Mineral Avenue in Libby (406/293-6194).**

### Other EPA site contacts include:

- Paul Peronard, On-Scene Coordinator, (800) 227-8917 x6808
- Wendy Thomi, Community Inv. Coordinator (406) 441-1150 x241
- Dr. Chris Weis, Toxicologist, (800) 227-8917 x6671
- Dr. Aubrey Miller, Public Health Doctor, (303) 844-7857

## Frequently Asked Questions



**Explain the removal process.** The asbestos ore is removed with a backhoe and transported from the site by truck. Visual observations are made and the remaining materials are sampled to make sure that all asbestos has been removed. When this is verified, the excavation is backfilled with asbestos-free fill material and compacted. The track surface is then replaced with either asphalt or rubber.

**How do we know that the school grounds are safe?** EPA has had numerous discussions with individuals who have knowledge of the school grounds. We have followed these interviews up with visual investigations and *extensive* sampling of non-paved exterior areas at all three schools. No asbestos has been discovered in areas other than those currently being remediated. Furthermore, EPA is using dust control measures and collecting air samples during the excavation to ensure that contamination does not spread to adjacent areas during the removals. Parents can be confident that their children will not be exposed to asbestos at the schools.

**During the removal, is it safe for my child to ride his/her bike past the schools?** Yes. The removal actions are being conducted under conditions designed to prevent asbestos from becoming airborne, and EPA is monitoring the air quality at the site boundary during the removal to verify public safety. However, because of the potential danger inherent with heavy equipment and trucks entering and exiting the site, we ask that you minimize the amount of time your children are near the site during the removals and remind them to be extra aware of road traffic during this time.

**When will we be able to play football and soccer on the fields adjacent to the high school track?** Due to the potential hazard from asbestos, the athletic fields adjacent to the track and the football field inside the track cannot be used during the excavation of asbestos from the track area. The practice fields will be open for use once excavation is completed. EPA anticipates this date to be by August 17, 2001. The football field cannot be used until after the track has been backfilled and compacted. EPA is planning to have the football field ready for use by the first scheduled home game on September 1.

**When will the tracks be ready for use?** The asbestos removal at the middle school track will be completed by the first day of school (September 4), and the replacement of the asphalt surface should be completed shortly thereafter. The removal at the high school track should be completed by August 15, and the track will be temporarily backfilled with material that will allow it to be used safely by September 1. EPA will make every attempt to finish the track this fall. However, due to contracting concerns, the rubberized surface may not be replaced until spring 2002.

**Was my child exposed to asbestos while attending the high school or middle school?** The asbestos-contaminated vermiculite was first used as a track base in the early 1970's. The tracks were covered by asphalt or rubber on 1983, shortly after health concerns were raised. If your child attended either school during the period when the vermiculite was uncovered, it is possible that he/she was exposed to asbestos. The exposure would have varied, depending upon several factors (amount of time spent in the track area, weather conditions, and type of activity).